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Emerson

Year Book

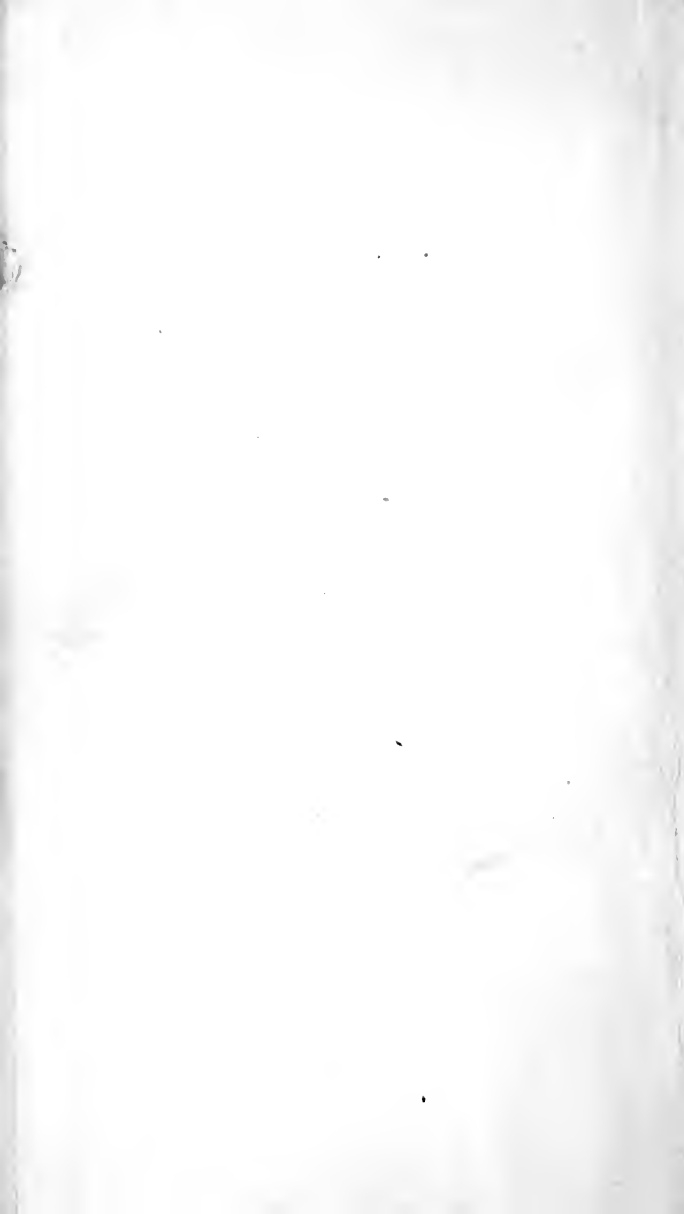
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





✓ EMERSON YEAR BOOK

SELECTIONS
FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR
FROM THE ESSAYS OF
RALPH WALDO EMERSON

BY
A. R. C.

*"He is thus the medium of the
highest influence to all who
are not on the same level"*

NEW-YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD ST.

1893

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JANUARY.

*I awoke this morning with devout thanksgiving for
my friends, the old and the new.*



January First.

The world exists for the education of each man. There is no stage or state of society, or mode or action in history, to which there is not somewhat corresponding in his life. Everything tends in a wonderful manner to abbreviate itself and yield its own virtue to him.

January Second.

We have the same interest in condition and character. We honor the rich, because they have externally the freedom, power, and grace which we feel to be proper to man, proper to us.

January Third.

All literature writes the character of the wise man. Books, monuments, pictures, conversation, are portraits in which he finds the lineaments he is forming.

January Fourth.

A man is the whole encyclopædia of facts. The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn, and Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, America, lie folded already in the first man.

January Fifth.

A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages.

January Sixth.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance.

January Seventh.

Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right.

January Eighth.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade.

January Ninth.

My life is for itself and not for a spectacle.

January Tenth.

A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza ;—read it forward, backward, or across, it spells the same thing.

January Eleventh.

He who has a thousand friends has not a
friend to spare,
And he who has one enemy will meet him
everywhere.

January Twelfth.

If any one will but take pains to observe the variety of actions to which he is equally inclined in certain moods of mind, and those to which he is averse, he will see how deep is the chain of affinity.

January Thirteenth.

It has been said that "common souls pay with what they do; nobler souls with what they are." And why? Because a profound nature awakens in us by its actions and words, by its very looks and manners, the same power and beauty that a gallery of sculpture, or of pictures, addresses.

January Fourteenth.

Honor is venerable to us because it is no ephemeris. It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage, because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

January Fifteenth.

We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death, and afraid of each other.

January Sixteenth.

Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good.

January Seventeenth.

He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things.

January Eighteenth.

Insist on yourself; never imitate.

January Nineteenth.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is Christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For everything that is given, something is taken. Society acquires new arts, and loses old instincts.

January Twentieth.

Every great man is unique.

January Twenty-first.

Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.
Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of your principles.

January Twenty-second.

Man's the elm, and Wealth the vine ;
Stanch and strong the tendrils twine :
Though the frail ringlets thee deceive,
None from its stock that vine can reave.
Fear not, then, thou child infirm,
There's no god dare wrong a worm.
Laurel crowns cleave to deserts,
And power to him who power exerts ;
Hast not thy share? On winged feet,
Lo! it rushes thee to meet ;
And all that Nature made thy own,
Floating in air or pent in stone,
Will vine the hills and swim the sea,
And, like thy shadow, follow thee.

January Twenty-third.

Every sweet hath its sour ; every evil, its good.

January Twenty-fourth.

Men seek to be great ; they would love offices, wealth, power, and fame. They think that to be great is to possess one side of nature, the sweet, without the other side, the bitter.

January Twenty-fifth.

Proverbs, like the sacred books of each nation, are the sanctuary of the intuitions.

January Twenty-sixth.

A man cannot speak but he judges himself. With his will, or against his will, he draws his portrait to the eye of his companions by every word. Every opinion reacts on him who utters it.

January Twenty-seventh.

If you are wise you will dread a prosperity which only loads you with more.

January Twenty-eighth.

He is base—and that is the one base thing in the universe—to receive favors, and render none.

January Twenty-ninth.

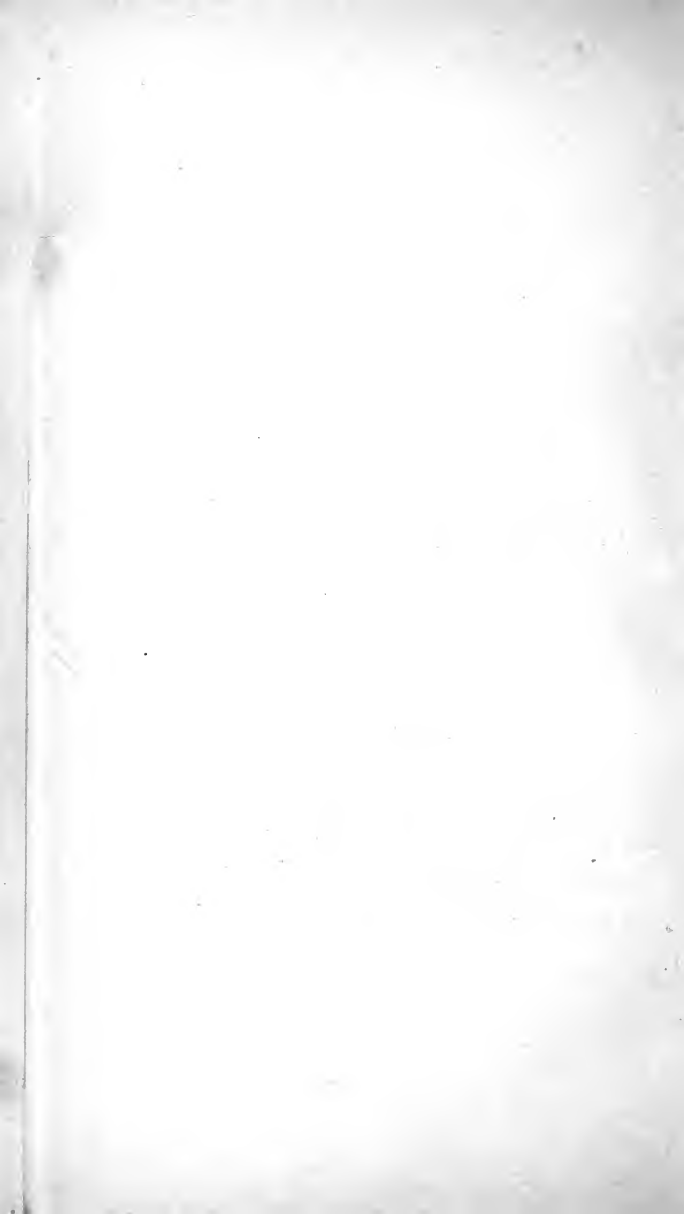
A great man is always willing to be little.

January Thirtieth.

A new person is to me a great event and hinders me from sleep.

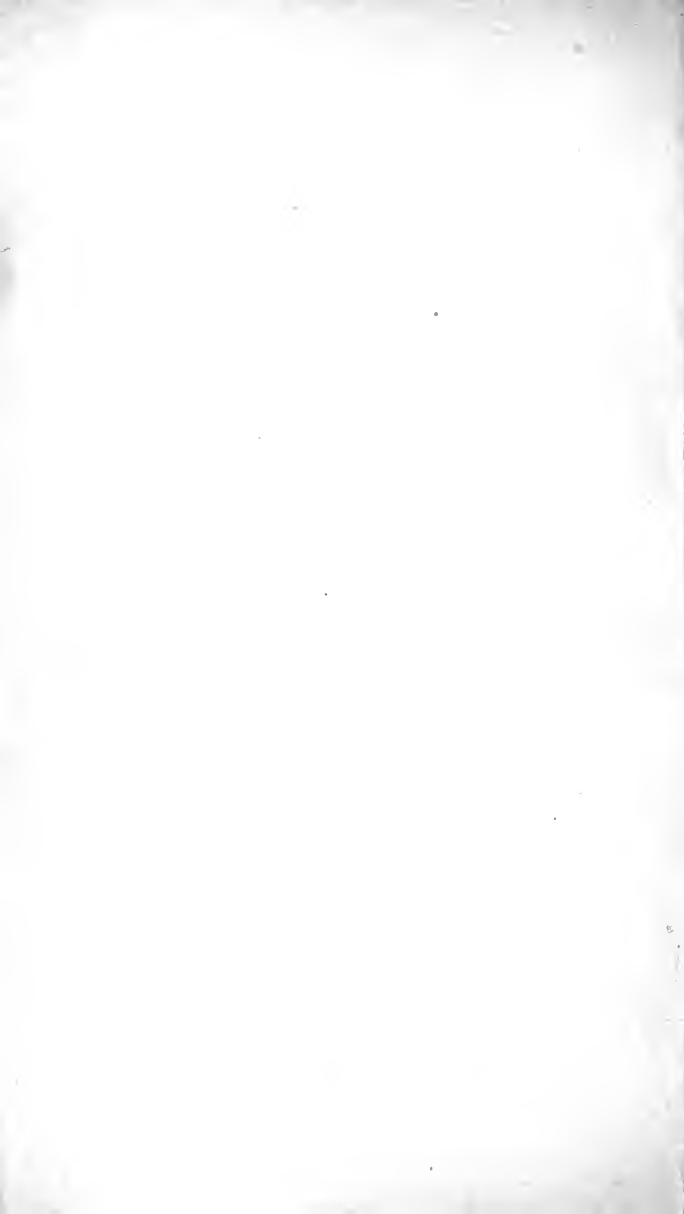
January Thirty-first.

I do not wish to treat friendships daintily, but with roughest courage. When they are real, they are not glass threads or frostwork, but the solidest thing we know.



FEBRUARY.

*Not less excellent, was the charm, last evening, of
a January sunset.*



February First.

Every man alone is sincere. At the entrance of a second person, hypocrisy begins.

February Second.

I wish that friendship should have feet, as well as eyes and eloquence. It must plant itself on the ground, before it vaults over the moon. I wish it to be a little of a citizen before it is quite a cherub.

February Third.

We talk sometimes of a great talent for conversation, as if it were a permanent property in some individuals. Conversation is an evanescent relation,—no more.

February Fourth.

Better be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo.

February Fifth.

I do then with my friends as I do with my books. I would have them where I can find them, but I seldom use them.

February Sixth.

Prudence is the virtue of the senses. It is the science of appearances. It is the outward action of the inward life.

February Seventh.

If a man lose his balance, and immerse himself in any trades or pleasures for their own sake, he may be a good wheel or pin, but he is not a cultivated man.

February Eighth.

Time, which shows so vacant, indivisible, and divine in its coming, is slit and peddled into trifles and tatters.

February Ninth.

Then climate is a great impediment to idle persons: we often resolve to give up the care of the weather, but still we regard the clouds and the rain.

February Tenth.

The domestic man, who loves no music so well as his kitchen clock, and the airs which the logs sing to him as they burn on the hearth, has solaces which others never dream of.

February Eleventh.

The hard soil and four months of snow make the inhabitant of the northern temperate zone wiser and abler than his fellow who enjoys the fixed smile of the tropics.

February Twelfth.

Let a man keep the law,—any law,—and his way will be strawn with satisfaction.

February Thirteenth.

There is more difference in the quality of our pleasures than in the amount.

February Fourteenth.

Our American character is marked by a more than average delight in accurate perception, which is shown by the currency of the byword, "No mistake."

February Fifteenth.

Come see the north wind's masonry,
Out of an unseen quarry ever more
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, on tree, or door.

February Sixteenth.

For nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as if for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy to-day.

February Seventeenth.

The misery of man appears like childish petulance, when we explore the steady and prodigal provision that has been made for his support and delight on this green ball which floats him through the heavens.

February Eighteenth.

In this country, we are very vain of our political institutions, which are singular in this, that they sprung, within the memory of living men, from the character and condition

of the people, which they still express with sufficient fidelity,—and we ostentatiously prefer them to any other in history.

February Nineteenth.

Great men or men of great gifts you shall easily find, but symmetrical men, never.

February Twentieth.

Truth is the summit of being: justice is the application of it to affairs.

February Twenty-first.

A healthy soul stands united with the Just and the True, as the magnet arranges itself with the pole, so that he stands to all beholders like a transparent object betwixt them and the sun, and who so journeys towards the sun, journeys towards that person.

February Twenty-second.

Men of character like to hear of their faults.

February Twenty-third.

Society is frivolous, and shreds its day into scraps, its conversation into ceremonies and escapes.

February Twenty-fourth.

In nature, there are no false valuations. A pound of water in the ocean-tempest has no more gravity than in a midsummer pond.

February Twenty-fifth.

We have no pleasure in thinking of a benevolence that is only measured by its works.

February Twenty-sixth.

Character may be ranked as having its natural place in the north. It shares the magnetic currents of the system. The feeble souls are drawn to the south or negative pole.

February Twenty-seventh.

What fact more conspicuous in modern history, than the creation of the gentleman?

February Twenty-eighth.

Thus grows up Fashion, an equivocal semblance, the most puissant, the most fantastic and frivolous, the most feared and followed, and which words and violence assault in vain.

February Twenty-ninth.

Defect in manners is usually the defect of fine perceptions.

MARCH.

The wind sows the seed.



March First.

Crossing a bare common in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear.

March Second.

A gentleman makes no noise: a lady is serene.

March Third.

One may be too punctual and too precise. He must leave the omniscience of business at the door, when he comes into the palace of beauty.

March Fourth.

The person who screams, or uses the superlative degree, or converses with heat, is quickly left alone.

March Fifth.

I pray my companion if he wishes for bread, to ask me for bread, and if he wishes for sassafras or arsenic, to ask me for them, and not to hold out his plate as if I knew already.

March Sixth.

Accuracy is essential to beauty, and quick perceptions to politeness, but not too quick perceptions.

March Seventh.

The secret of success in Society is a certain heartiness and sympathy.

March Eighth.

Even the line of heroes is not utterly extinct. There is still ever some admirable person in plain clothes, standing on the wharf, who jumps in to rescue a drowning man.

March Ninth.

Gifts of one who loved me,—
'Twas high time they came ;
When he ceased to love me,
Time they stopped for shame.

March Tenth.

It is said that the world is in a state of bankruptcy, that the world owes the world more than the world can pay, and ought to go into chancery and be sold.

March Eleventh.

Nature cannot be surprised in undress.
Beauty breaks in everywhere.

March Twelfth.

The waving of the boughs in the storm is new to me, and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.

March Thirteenth.

One thing is forever good ;
That one thing is success,—
Dear to the Eumenides,
And to all the heavenly brood.

March Fourteenth.

Scatter-brained and “afternoon men”
spoil much more than their own affair, in
spoilng the temper of those who deal with
them.

March Fifteenth.

Beauty should be the dowry of every man
and woman, as invariably as sensation ; but
it is rare.

March Sixteenth.

Genius should be the child of genius, and every child should be inspired; but now it is not to be predicted of any child, and nowhere is it pure.

March Seventeenth.

He that despiseth small things will perish by little and little.

March Eighteenth.

A man of genius of an ardent temperament, reckless of physical laws, self-indulgent, becomes presently unfortunate, querulous, a "discomfortable cousin," a thorn to himself and to others.

March Nineteenth.

The eye of prudence may never shut.

March Twentieth.

In skating over thin ice, our safety is in our speed.

March Twenty-first.

How much of human life is lost in waiting! let him not make his fellow-creatures wait.

March Twenty-second.

How many words and promises are promises of conversation! let his be words of fate.

March Twenty-third.

We must not try to write the laws of any one virtue, looking at that only. Human nature loves no contradictions, but is symmetrical.

March Twenty-fourth.

Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in the liar, but is a stab at the health of human society.

March Twenty-fifth.

Trust men, and they will be true to you ;
treat them greatly, and they will show themselves great, though they make an exception in your favor to all their rules in trade.

March Twenty-sixth.

Entire self-possession may make a battle very little more dangerous to life than a match at foils or at football.

March Twenty-seventh.

The terrors of the storm are chiefly confined to the parlor and the cabin.

March Twenty-eighth.

In the occurrence of unpleasant things among neighbors, fear comes readily to heart, and magnifies the consequence of the other party ; but it is a bad counsellor.

March Twenty-ninth.

Life is a festival only to the wise. Seen from the nook and chimney-side of prudence it wears a ragged and dangerous front.

March Thirtieth.

Heroism feels and never reasons, and therefore is always right.

March Thirty-first.

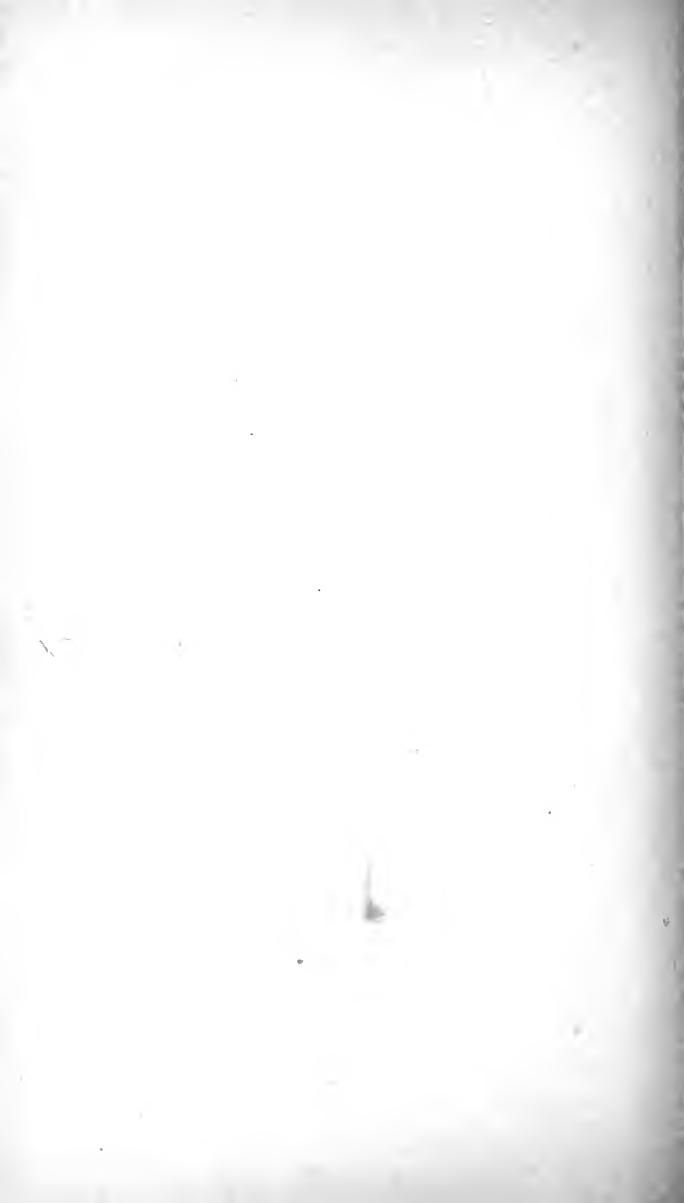
A great man scarcely knows how he dines, how he dresses ; but without railing or precision, his living is natural and poetic.



APRIL.

Early or late, the falling rain

Arrived in April, time to swell his grain.



April First.

For me, in showers, in sweeping showers, the
Spring
Visits the valley ;—break away the clouds,—
I bathe in the morn's soft and silvered air,
And loiter willing by yon loitering stream.
Sparrows far off, and nearer, April's bird,
Blue-coated,—flying before from tree to tree,
Courageous sing a delicate overture
To lead the tardy concert of the year.

April Second.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible.

April Third.

Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight ; for every hour and change corre-

sponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight.

April Fourth.

In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

April Fifth.

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me and I to them.

April Sixth.

The land we live in has no interest so dear, if it knew its want, as the fit consecration of days to reason and thought.

April Seventh.

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

April Eighth.

We are a puny and a fickle folk. Avarice, hesitation, and following are our diseases. The rapid wealth which hundreds in the community acquire in trade, or by the incessant expansion of our population and arts, enchants the eyes of all the rest.

April Ninth.

Whilst the multitude of men degrade each other, and give currency to desponding doctrines, the scholar must be a bringer of hope, and must reinforce man against himself.

April Tenth.

Great men do not content us. It is their solitude, not their force, that makes them conspicuous. There is somewhat indigent and tedious about them. They are poorly tied to one thought. If they are prophets, they are egotists ; if polite and various, they are shallow.

April Eleventh.

As our soils and rocks lie in strata, concentric strata, so do all men's thinkings run laterally, never vertically.

April Twelfth.

Every earnest glance we give to the realities around us, with intent to learn, proceeds from a holy impulse, and is really songs of praise.

April Thirteenth.

The ocean is everywhere the same, but it has no character until seen with the shore or the ship.

April Fourteenth.

An individual man is a fruit which it cost all the foregoing ages to form and ripen.

April Fifteenth.

It was always the theory of literature, that the word of a poet was authoritative and final. He was supposed to be the mouth of a divine wisdom. We rather envied his circumstance than his talent.

April Sixteenth.

I conceive a man as always spoken to from behind, and unable to turn his head and see the speaker.

April Seventeenth.

He who is in love, is wise and becoming wiser, sees newly every time he looks at the object beloved, drawing from it with his eyes and his mind those virtues which he possesses.

April Eighteenth.

All your learning of all literature would never enable you to anticipate one of its thoughts or expressions, and yet each is natural and familiar as household words.

April Nineteenth.

And the reason why all men honor love, is because it looks up and not down ; aspires and not despairs.

April Twentieth.

Genius sheds wisdom like perfume, and advertises us that it flows out of a deeper source than the foregoing silence, that it knows so deeply and speaks so musically, because it is itself a mutation of the thing it describes. It is sun and moon and wave and fire in music, as astronomy is thought and harmony in masses of matter.

April Twenty-first.

When thought is best, there is most of it.

April Twenty-second.

Life alone can impart life; and though we should burst, we can only be valued as we make ourselves valuable.

April Twenty-third.

There is no luck in literary reputation. They who make up the final verdict upon every book, are not the partial and noisy readers of the hour when it appears; but a court as of angels, a public not to be bribed, not to be entreated, and not to be overawed, decides upon every man's title to fame. Only those books come down which deserve to last.

April Twenty-fourth.

Human character evermore publishes itself. The most fugitive deed and word, the

mere air of doing a thing, the intimated purpose, expresses character.

April Twenty-fifth.

Faces never lie, it is said. No man need be deceived, who will study the changes of expression.

April Twenty-sixth.

A man passes for that he is worth. Very idle is all curiosity concerning other people's estimate of us, and all fear of remaining unknown is not less so.

April Twenty-seventh.

When a man speaks the truth in the spirit of truth, his eye is as clear as the heavens. When he has base ends, and speaks falsely, the eye is muddy and sometimes asquint.

April Twenty-eighth.

Thou shalt command us all,—
April's cowslip, Summer's clover,
To the gentian in the fall,
Blue-eyed pet of a blue-eyed lover.

April Twenty-ninth.

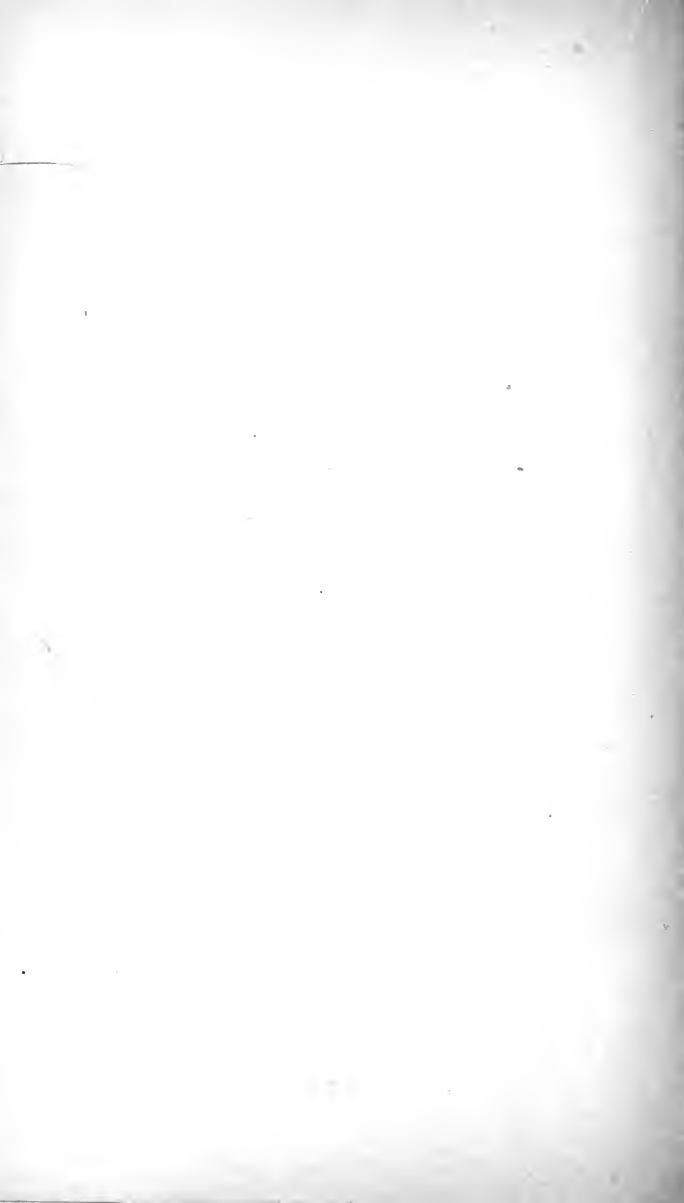
Never was a sincere word utterly lost.

April Thirtieth.

A fop may sit in any chair of the world,
nor be distinguished for his hour from Homer
and Washington; but there need never be
any doubt concerning the respective ability
of human beings.

MAY. •

Onward and nearer rides the sun of May.



May First.

The south-wind brings
Life, sunshine and desire,
And on every mount and meadow
Breathes aromatic fire.

May Second.

Pretension never wrote an Iliad, nor drove
back Xerxes, nor Christianized the world,
nor abolished slavery.

May Third.

If you would not be known to do anything, never do it. A man may play the fool in the drifts of a desert, but every grain of sand shall seem to see.

May Fourth.

Common men are apologists for men ; they bow the head, excuse themselves with prolix reasons, and accumulate appearances, because the substance is not.

May Fifth.

We call the poet inactive, because he is not a president, a merchant, or a porter.

May Sixth.

The epochs of our life are not in the visible facts of our choice of a calling, our marriage, our acquisition of an office, and the like, but in a silent thought by the way-side as we walk ; in a thought which revises our entire manner of life, and says, "Thus hast thou done, but it were better thus."

May Seventh.

The rich mind lies in the sun and sleeps,
and is Nature. To think is to act.

May Eighth.

Let a man believe in God, and not in
names and places and persons.

May Ninth.

The delicious fancies of youth reject least
savor of a mature philosophy, as chilling with
age and pedantry their purple bloom.

May Tenth.

Each man sees over his own experience a certain stain of error, whilst that of other men looks fair and ideal.

May Eleventh.

The strong bent of nature is seen in proportion which this topic of personal relation usurps in the conversation of society.

May Twelfth.

Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection.

May Thirteenth.

The flowers, the animals, the mountains reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

May Fourteenth.

Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child.

May Fifteenth.

If the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him.

May Sixteenth.

There are days which occur in this climate, at almost any season of the year, wherein the world reaches its perfection, when the air, the heavenly bodies, and the earth make a harmony, as if Nature would indulge her offspring.

May Seventeenth.

Cities give not the human senses room enough.

May Eighteenth.

He who knows the most, he who knows what sweets and virtues are in the ground, the water, the plants, the heavens, and how to come at these enchantments, is the rich and royal man.

May Nineteenth.

The difference between landscape and landscape is small, but there is great difference in the beholders.

May Twentieth.

The green grass is bowing,
The morning wind is in it;
'Tis a tune worth thy knowing,
Though it change every minute.

May Twenty-first.

The stream of zeal sparkles with real fire,
and not with reflex rays of sun and moon.

May Twenty-second.

Not less remarkable is the overfaith of each man in the importance of what he has to do or say. The poet, the prophet, has a higher value for what he utters than any hearer, and therefore it gets spoken.

May Twenty-third.

All promise outruns the performance.

May Twenty-fourth.

Society always consists, in greatest part, of young and foolish persons. The old, who have seen through the hypocrisy of courts and statesmen, die, and leave no wisdom to their sons.

May Twenty-fifth.

Things have their laws, as well as men;
and things refuse to be trifled with.

May Twenty-sixth.

Cover up a pound of earth so cunningly,
divide and subdivide it; melt it to liquid,
convert it to gas; it will always weigh a
pound.

May Twenty-seventh.

The boundaries of personal influence it is
impossible to fix, as persons are organs of
moral or supernatural force.

May Twenty-eighth.

All forms of government symbolize an immortal government, common to all dynasties and independent of number, perfect where two men exist, perfect where there is only one man.

May Twenty-ninth.

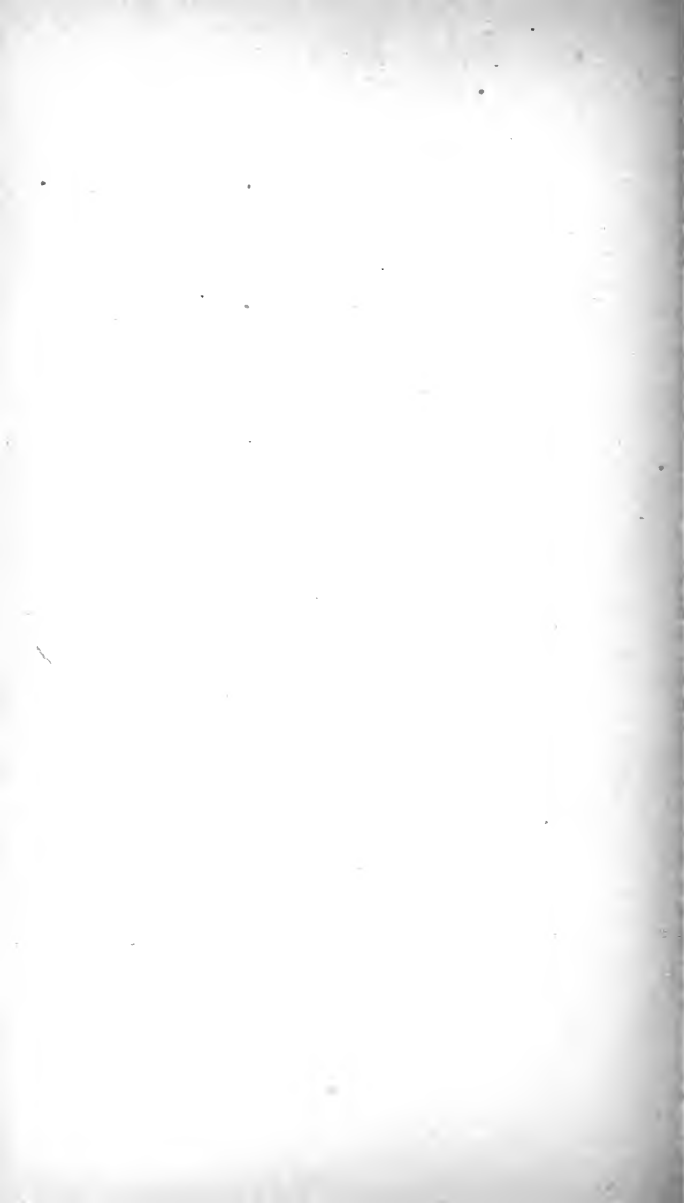
Of all debts, men are least willing to pay the taxes. What a satire is this on government! Everywhere they think they get their money's worth, except for these.

May Thirtieth.

Every thought which genius and piety throw into the world, alters the world.

May Thirty-first.

But each of us has some talent, can do somewhat useful, or graceful, or formidable, or amusing, or lucrative.



JUNE.

*A gay and pleasant sound is the whetting of the
scythe in the mornings of June.*



June First.

The world rolls; the circumstances vary every hour.

June Second.

Let the soul be assured that somewhere in the universe it should rejoin its friend, and it would be content and cheerful alone for a thousand years.

June Third.

Friendship, like the immortality of the soul, is too good to be believed.

June Fourth.

Almost every man we meet requires some civility,—requires to be humored; he has some fame, some talent, some whim of religion or philanthropy in his head, that is not to be questioned, and which spoils all conversation with him.

June Fifth.

Two may talk, and one may hear; but three cannot take part in a conversation of the most sincere and searching sort.

June Sixth.

What your heart thinks great is great. The soul's emphasis is always right.

June Seventh.

If a teacher have any opinion which he wishes to conceal, his pupils will become as fully indoctrinated into that as into any which he publishes.

June Eighth.

I love and honor Epaminondas, but I do not wish to be Epaminondas. I hold it more just to love the world of this hour, than the world of his hour.

June Ninth.

One piece of the tree is cut for a weather-cock, and one for the sleeper of a bridge; the virtue of the wood is apparent in both.

June Tenth.

We paint those qualities which we do not possess. The poet admires the man of energy and tactics; the merchant breeds his son for the church or the bar; and where a man is not vain and egotistic, you shall find what he has not by his praise.

June Eleventh.

In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows.

June Twelfth.

Inaction is cowardice, but there can be no scholar without the heroic mind.

June Thirteenth.

The scholar shames us by his bifold lie. Whilst something higher than prudence is active, he is admirable ; when common-sense is wanted, he is an encumbrance.

June Fourteenth.

To-morrow will be like to-day. Life wastes itself whilst we are preparing to live.

June Fifteenth.

But hospitality must be for service, and not for show, or it pulls down the host.

June Sixteenth.

Be neither chided nor flattered out of your position of perpetual inquiry.

June Seventeenth.

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars.

June Eighteenth.

There is no object so foul that intense light will not make beautiful.

June Nineteenth.

The inhabitants of cities suppose that the country landscape is pleasant only half the year.

June Twentieth.

Every natural act is graceful. Every heroic act is also decent, and causes the place and the bystanders to shine.

June Twenty-first.

Nothing divine dies. All good is eternally reproductive.

June Twenty-second.

Nothing is quite beautiful alone ; nothing but is beautiful in the whole.

June Twenty-third.

Children and savages use only nouns or names of things, which they convert into verbs, and apply to analogous acts.

June Twenty-fourth.

A bell and a plough have each their use, and neither can do the office of the other. Water is good to drink, coal to burn, wool to wear ; but wool cannot be drunk, nor water spun, nor coal eaten.

June Twenty-fifth.

The foolish have no range in their scale,
but suppose every man is as every other
man.

June Twenty-sixth.

What is a farm but a mute gospel? The
chaff and the wheat, weeds, and plants,
blight, rain, insects, sun,—it is a sacred em-
blem from the first furrow of spring to the
last stack which the snow of winter overtakes
in the fields.

June Twenty-seventh.

The moral influence of nature upon every
individual is that amount of truth which it
illustrates to him.

June Twenty-eighth.

A man who seldom rides needs only to get into a coach and traverse his own town, to turn the street into a puppet-show.

June Twenty-ninth.

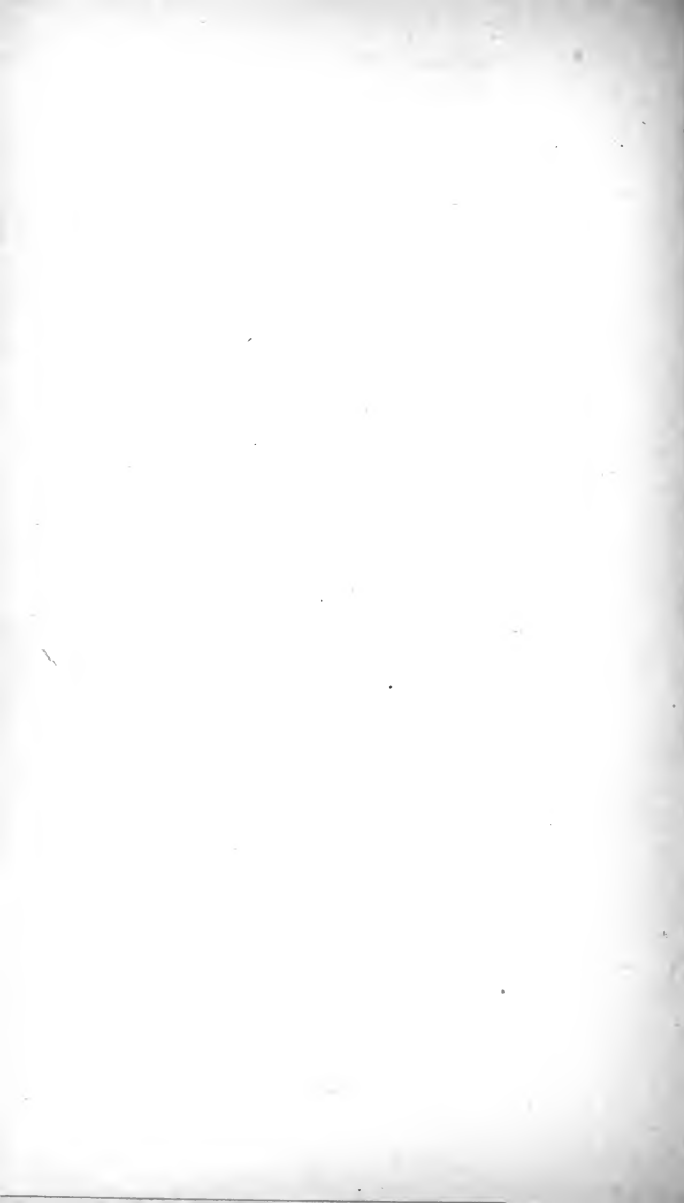
Whilst thus the poet animates nature with his own thoughts, he differs from the philosopher only herein, that the one proposes Beauty as his main end: the other, Truth.

June Thirtieth.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers.

JULY.

In July, the blue pontedemia, or pickerel-weed, blooms in large beds in the shallow parts of our pleasant river.



July First.

'Twas one of the charmèd days
When the genius of God doth flow,
The wind may alter twenty ways,
A tempest cannot blow ;
It may blow north, it still is warm ;
Or south, it still is clear ;
Or east, it smells like a clover-farm ;
Or west, no thunder fear.

July Second.

Who is the better for the philosopher who
conceals his accomplishments, and hides his
thoughts from the waiting world?

July Third.

Society is full of infirm people, who incessantly summon others to serve them.

July Fourth.

It is said that in our license of construing the Constitution, and in the despotism of public opinion, we have no anchor.

July Fifth.

The Americans have many virtues, but they have not Faith and Hope. I know no two words whose meaning is more lost sight of. We use these words as if they were as obsolete as Selah and Amen.

July Sixth.

We talk of the world but we mean a few men and women.

July Seventh.

Thoughts walk and speak, and look with eyes at me, and transport me into new and magnificent scenes.

July Eighth.

There is no interest or institution so poor and withered, but if a new strong man could be born into it, he would immediately redeem and replace it.

July Ninth.

Every fact we have was brought here by some person; and there is none that will not change and pass away before a person whose nature is broader than the person whom the fact in question represents.

July Tenth.

As the solar system moves forward in the heavens, certain stars open before us, and certain stars close up behind us ; so is man's life.

July Eleventh.

This *Ennui*, for which we Saxons had no name, this word of France has got a terrible significance. It shortens life, and bereaves the day of its light.

July Twelfth.

Conservatism makes no poetry, breathes no prayer, has no invention ; it is all memory.

July Thirteenth.

Reform has no gratitude, no prudence, no husbandry.

July Fourteenth.

It makes a great difference to your figure and to your thought, whether your foot is advancing or receding.

July Fifteenth.

Old age begins in the nursery, and before the young American is put into jacket and trousers, he says, "I want something which I never saw before," and "I wish I was not I."

July Sixteenth.

So many promising youths and never a finished man!

July Seventeenth.

We affect to dwell with our friends in their absence, but we do not; when deed, word, or letter comes not, they let us go.

July Eighteenth.

We inflate our paper currency, we repair commerce with unlimited credit, and are presently visited with unlimited bankruptcy.

July Nineteenth.

We build railroads, we know not for what or for whom ; but one thing is certain, that we who build will receive the very smallest share of benefit.

July Twentieth.

Fathers wish to be fathers of the minds of their children, and behold with impatience a new character and way of thinking presuming to show itself in their own son or daughter.

July Twenty-first.

Difference of opinion is the one crime which kings never forgive.

July Twenty-second.

The patriarchal form of government readily becomes despotic, as each person may see in his own family.

July Twenty-third.

In America, out of doors all seems a market; in doors, an air-tight store of conventionalism.

July Twenty-fourth.

In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair.

July Twenty-fifth.

To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and which shall never be seen again.

July Twenty-sixth.

The heavens change every moment, and reflect their glory or gloom on the plains beneath.

July Twenty-seventh.

We are taught by great actions that the universe is the property of every individual in it.

July Twenty-eighth.

All men are in some degree impressed by the face of the world; some men even to delight. This love of beauty is Taste.

July Twenty-ninth.

An enraged man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch.

July Thirtieth.

Light and darkness are our familiar expression for knowledge and ignorance.

July Thirty-first.

Throw a stone into the stream, and the circles that propagate themselves are the beautiful type of all influence.



AUGUST.

Nature recites her lesson once more in a higher mood.



August First.

"O hasten;" 'Tis our time,
Ere yet the red summer
Scorch our delicate prime,
Loved of bee,—the tawny hummer.

August Second.

The aspect of nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. 'The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.

August Third.

Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man?

August Fourth.

Every revolution was first a thought in one man's mind, and when the same thought occurs to another man, it is the key to that era.

August Fifth.

All that Shakspeare says of the king, yonder slip of a boy that reads in the corner feels to be true of himself.

August Sixth.

Praise is looked, homage tendered, love flows from mute nature, from the mountains and the lights of the firmament.

August Seventh.

Every chemical substance, every plant, every animal in its growth, teaches the unity of cause, the variety of appearance.

August Eighth.

Nature is an endless combination and repetition of a very few laws. She hums the old well-known air through innumerable variations.

August Ninth.

There are men whose manners have the same essential splendor as the simple and awful sculpture on the friezes of the Parthenon, and the remains of the earliest Greek art.

August Tenth.

The trivial experience of every day is always verifying some old prediction to us, and converting into things the words and signs which we had heard and seen without heed.

August Eleventh.

The man who has seen the rising moon break out of the clouds at midnight has been present like an archangel at the creation of light and of the world.

August Twelfth.

I have seen in the sky a chain of summer lightning which at once showed to me that the Greeks drew from nature when they painted the thunderbolt in the hand of Jove.

August Thirteenth.

There is no great and no small
To the Soul that maketh all ;
And where it cometh, all things are ;
And it cometh everywhere.

August Fourteenth.

Tantalus means the impossibility of drinking the waters of thought which are always gleaming and waving within sight of the soul.

August Fifteenth.

The transmigration of souls is no fable.
I would it were ; but men and women are
only half human.

August Sixteenth.

A man is a bundle of relations, a knot of roots, whose flower and fruitage is the world.

August Seventeenth.

To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius.

August Eighteenth.

A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but when he has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace.

August Nineteenth.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string.

August Twentieth.

Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events.

August Twenty-first.

Infancy conforms to nobody: all conform to it, so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it.

August Twenty-second.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature.

August Twenty-third.

Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater.

August Twenty-fourth.

Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.

August Twenty-fifth.

What I must do is all that concerns me,
not what the people think.

August Twenty-sixth.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of
little minds, adored by little statesmen and
philosophers and divines.

August Twenty-seventh.

To be great is to be misunderstood.

August Twenty-eighth.

With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall.

August Twenty-ninth.

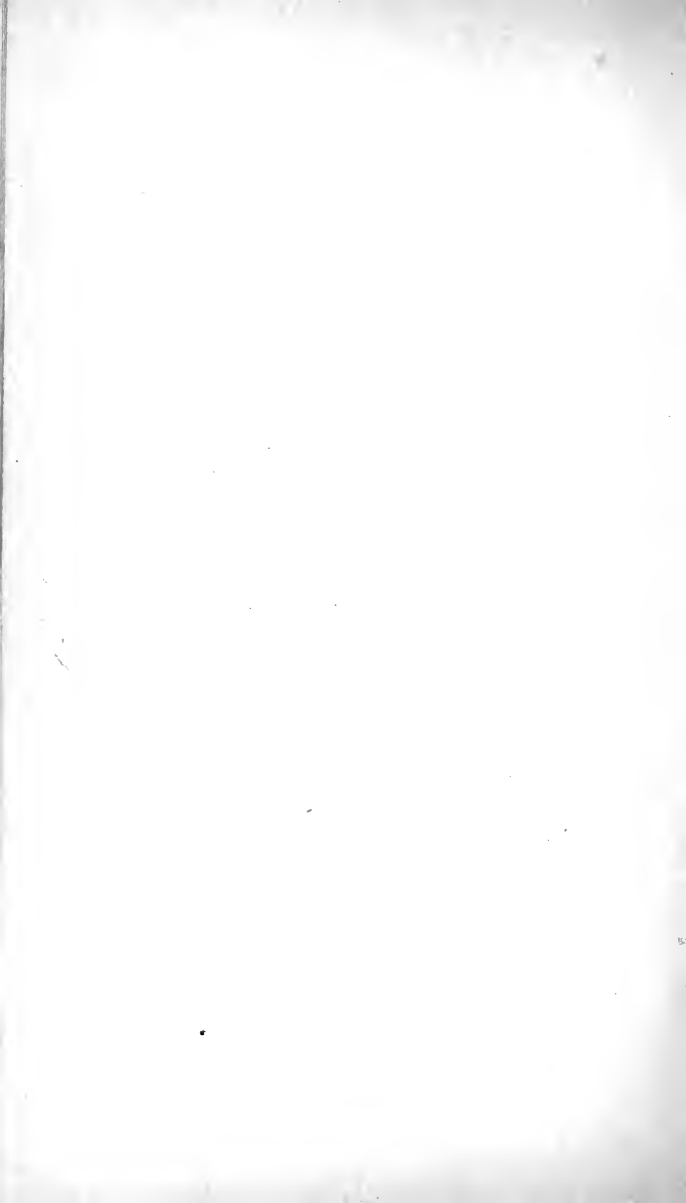
Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

August Thirtieth.

Whenever a mind is simple, and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass away,—means, teachers, texts, temples, fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour.

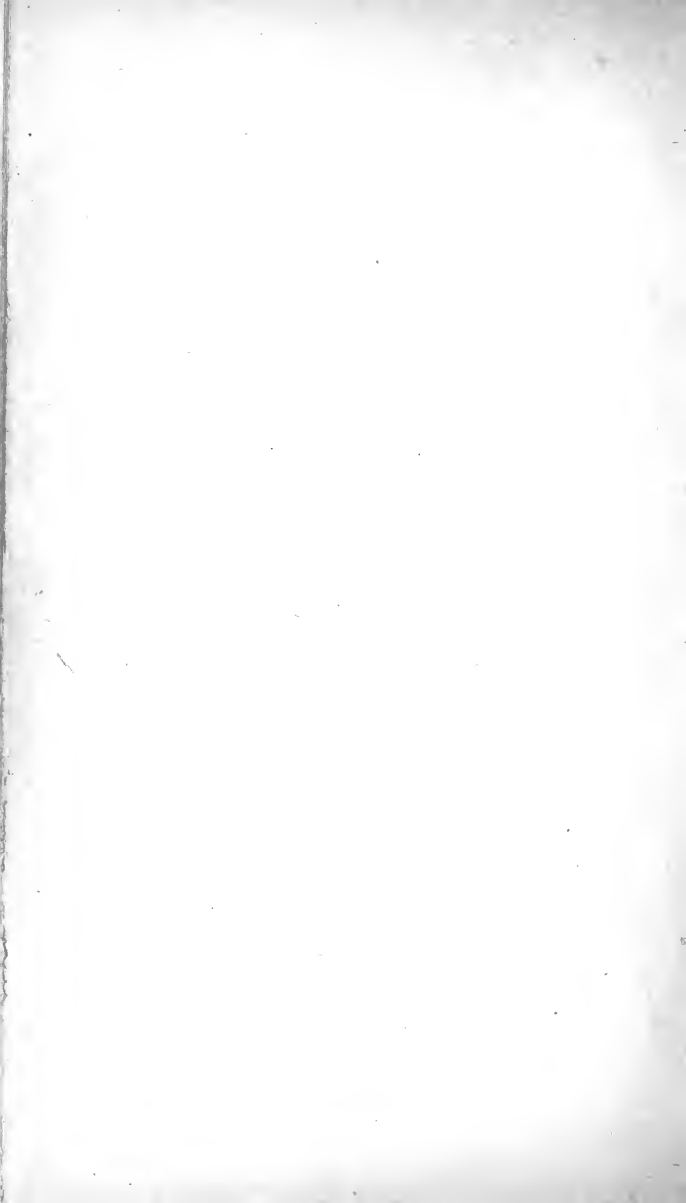
August Thirty-first.

When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.



SEPTEMBER.

*One harvest from thy field,
Homeward brought the oxen strong.*



September First.

Fairest, choose the fairest members
Of our lithe society ;
June's glories and September's
Show our love and piety.

September Second.

Who has more obedience than I masters
me, though he should not raise a finger.

September Third.

Power is in nature the essential measure
of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain
in her kingdoms which cannot help itself.

September Fourth.

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not.

September Fifth.

The waves of the sea do not more speedily seek a level from their loftiest tossing, than the varieties of condition tend to equalize themselves.

September Sixth.

All things are double, one against another. —Tit for tat; an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; blood for blood; measure for measure; love for love.—Give and it shall be given you.

September Seventh.

You cannot do wrong without suffering wrong.

September Eighth.

The borrower runs in his own debt.

September Ninth.

The wise man throws himself on the side of his assailants. It is more his interest than it is theirs to find his weak point.

September Tenth.

Man's life is a progress and not a station.

September Eleventh.

It is natural and beautiful that childhood should inquire, and maturity teach ; but it is time enough to answer questions when they are asked.

September Twelfth.

The simplicity of the universe is very different from the simplicity of a machine.

September Thirteenth.

A little consideration of what takes place around us every day would show us that a higher law than that of our will regulates events.

September Fourteenth.

A man is a method, a progressive arrangement; a selecting principle, gathering his like to him, wherever he goes.

September Fifteenth.

It is vain to attempt to keep a secret from one who has a right to know it. It will tell itself.

September Sixteenth.

The mood into which a friend can bring us, is his dominion over us.

September Seventeenth.

Hideous dreams are exaggerations of the sins of the day.

September Eighteenth.

All mankind love a lover.

September Nineteenth.

Introduce a base person among gentlemen ; it is all to no purpose ; he is not their fellow. Every society protects itself. The company is perfectly safe, and he is not one of them, though his body is in the room.

September Twentieth.

The way to speak and write what shall not go out of fashion is, to speak and write sincerely.

September Twenty-first.

The permanence of all books is fixed by no effort friendly or hostile, but by their own specific gravity, or the intrinsic importance of their contents to the constant mind of man.

September Twenty-second.

The great man knew not that he was great.
It took a century or two for that fact to
appear.

September Twenty-third.

The laws of disease, physicians say, are
as beautiful as the laws of health.

September Twenty-fourth.

Truth has not single victories; all things
are its organs,—not only dust and stones,
but errors and lies.

September Twenty-fifth.

The world is full of judgment days, and into every assembly that a man enters, in every action he attempts, he is gauged and stamped.

September Twenty-sixth.

Never a magnanimity fell to the ground, but there is some heart to greet and accept it unexpectedly.

September Twenty-seventh.

A man passes for what he is worth. What he is, engraves itself on his face, on his form on his fortunes, in letters of light.

September Twenty-eighth.

Behind us, as we go, all things assume
pleasing forms, as clouds do far off.

September Twenty-ninth.

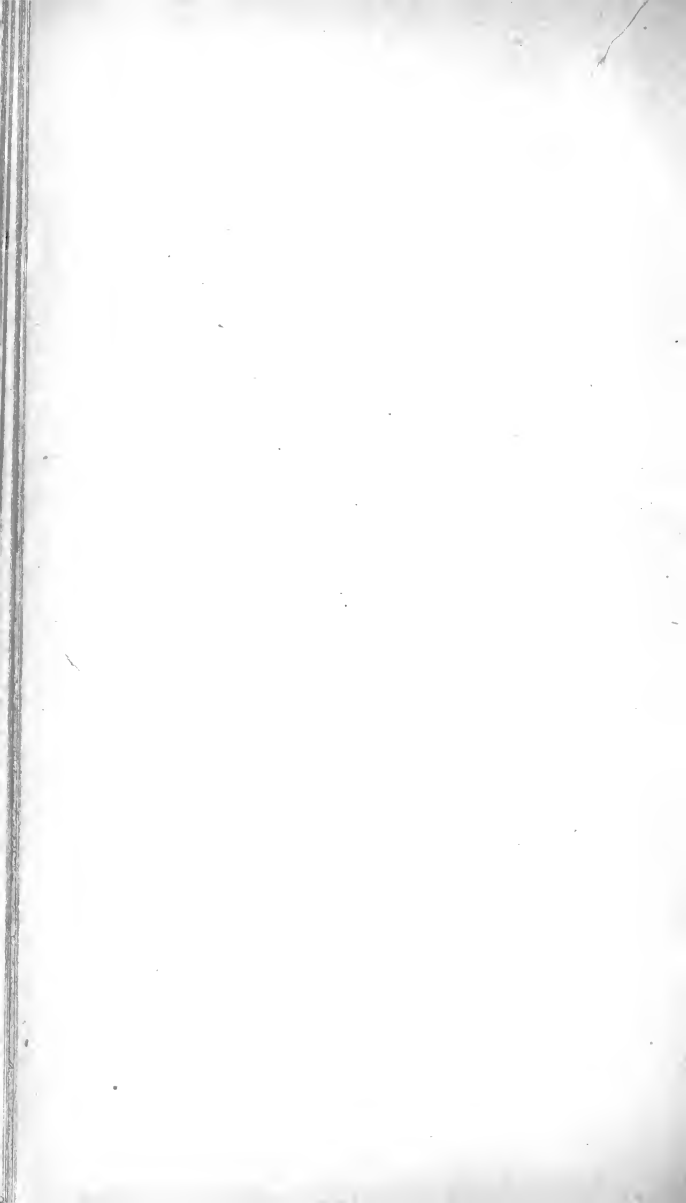
Go put your creed into your deed,
Nor speak with double tongue!

September Thirtieth.

We pain ourselves to please nobody.

OCTOBER.

*The beauty that shimmers in the yellow afternoon
of October,—who ever could clutch it?*



October First.

These halcyons may be looked for with a little more assurance in that pure October weather, which we distinguish by the name of the Indian summer.

October Second.

As sunbeams stream through liberal space
And nothing jostle or displace,
So waved the pine-tree through my thought
And fanned the dreams it never brought.

October Third.

The day, immeasurably long, sleeps over the broad hills and warm wide fields. To have lived through all its sunny hours seems longevity enough.

October Fourth.

I chide society, I embrace solitude, and yet I am not so ungrateful as not to see the wise, the lovely, and the noble-minded as from time to time they pass my gate.

October Fifth.

My friends have come to me unsought.
The great God gave them to me.

October Sixth.

We over-estimate the conscience of our friend. His goodness seems better than our goodness, his nature finer, his temptations less. Our own thought sounds new and larger from his mouth.

October Seventh.

In strictness, the soul does not respect men as it respects itself.

October Eighth.

Only the star dazzles; the planet has a faint, moon-like ray.

October Ninth.

What a perpetual disappointment is actual society, even of the virtuous and gifted.

October Tenth.

Bashfulness and apathy are a tough husk, in which a delicate organization is protected from premature ripening. It would be lost, if it knew itself before any of the best souls were yet ripe enough to know and own it.

October Eleventh.

Love, which is the essence of God, is not for levity, but for the total worth of man.

October Twelfth.

A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I may think aloud.

October Thirteenth.

Sincerity is the luxury allowed, like diamonds and authority, only to the highest rank, *that* being permitted to speak truth, as having none above it to court or conform to.

October Fourteenth.

But to most of us Society shows not its face and eye, but its side and back.

October Fifteenth.

To stand in true relations with men in a false age is worth a fit of insanity, is it not?

October Sixteenth.

I much prefer the company of plough-boys and tin-peddlers, to the silken and perfumed amity which celebrates its days of encounter by a frivolous display, by rides in a curricule, and dinners at the best taverns.

October Seventeenth.

No two men but, being left alone with each other, enter into simpler relations. Yet it is affinity that determines *which* two shall converse.

October Eighteenth.

Unrelated men give little joy to each other; will never suspect the latent power of each.

October Nineteenth.

The only reward of virtue is virtue; the only way to have a friend is to be one.

October Twentieth.

My prudence consists in avoiding and going without, not in the inventing of means and methods, not in adroit steering, not in gentle repairing.

October Twenty-first.

Yet I love facts, and hate lubricity and people without perception.

October Twenty-second.

The spurious prudence, making the senses final, is the god of sots and cowards, and is the subject of all comedy. It is nature's joke, and therefore literature's.

October Twenty-third.

Do what we can, summer will have its flies; if we walk in the woods, we must feed mosquitoes; if we go a-fishing, we must expect a wet coat.

October Twenty-fourth.

But the discomfort of unpunctuality, of confusion of thought about facts, of inattention to the wants of to-morrow, is of no nation.

October Twenty-fifth.

If the hive be disturbed by rash and stupid hands, instead of honey, it will yield us bees.

October Twenty-sixth.

Yet what is more lonesome and sad than the sound of a whetstone or mower's rifle, when it is too late in the season to make hay?

October Twenty-seventh.

This perpendicularity we demand of all the figures in this picture of life. Let them stand on their feet, and not float and swing. Let us know where to find them.

October Twenty-eighth.

The prudence which secures an outward well-being is not to be studied by one set of men, whilst heroism and holiness are studied by another, but they are reconcilable.

October Twenty-ninth.

Every man is actually weak, and apparently strong. To himself, he seems weak; to others, formidable. You are afraid of Grim; but Grim also is afraid of you.

October Thirtieth.

Far off, men swell and bully, and threaten; bring them hand to hand, and they are a feeble folk.

October Thirty-first.

We cannot bandy words with nature, or
deal with her as we deal with persons.



NOVEMBER.

I like gray days and autumn and winter weather.



November First.

A squirrel leaping from bough to bough,
and making the wood but one wide tree for
his pleasure, fills the eye not less than a lion,
—is beautiful, self-sufficing, and stands then
and there for nature.

November Second.

Though we travel the world over to find
the beautiful, we must carry it with us, or
we find it not.

November Third.

I do not wonder that Newton, with an attention habitually engaged on the paths of planets and suns, should have wondered what the Earl of Pembroke found to admire in "stone dolls."

November Fourth.

Picture and sculpture are the celebrations and festivities of form. But true art is never fixed, but always flowing.

November Fifth.

The sweetest music is not in the oratorio, but in the human voice when it speaks from its instant life tones of tenderness, truth and courage.

November Sixth.

A great man is a new statue in every attitude and action.

November Seventh.

A beautiful woman is a picture which drives all beholders nobly mad.

November Eighth.

Life may be lyric or epic, as well as a poem or a romance.

November Ninth.

A popular novel, a theatre, or a ball-room makes us feel that we are all paupers in the almshouse of this world, without dignity, without skill, or industry.

November Tenth.

The fountains of invention and beauty in modern society are all but dried up.

November Eleventh.

Men are not well pleased with the figure they make in their own imaginations, and they flee to art, and convey their better sense in an oratorio, a statue, or a picture.

November Twelfth.

As long as I hear truth, I am bathed by a beautiful element, and am not conscious of any limits to my nature.

November Thirteenth.

Jesus says, Leave father, mother, house, and lands, and follow me. Who leaves all receives more. This is as true intellectually as morally.

November Fourteenth.

We were put into our bodies, as fire is put into a pan, to be carried about; but there is no accurate adjustment between the spirit and the organ, much less is the latter the germination of the former.

November Fifteenth.

The young man reveres men of genius, because, to speak truly, they are more himself than he is.

November Sixteenth.

Nature enhances her beauty to the eye of loving men, from their belief that the poet is beholding her shows at the same time.

November Seventeenth.

I know not how it is that we need an interpreter; but the great majority of men seem to be minors, who have not yet come into possession of their own, or mutes, who cannot report the conversation they have had with nature.

November Eighteenth.

There is no man who does not anticipate a supersensual utility in the sun, and stars, earth and water. These stand and wait to render him a peculiar service.

November Nineteenth.

The poet is the sayer, the namer, and represents beauty. He is a sovereign, and stands on the centre.

November Twentieth.

For the world is not painted or adorned, but is from the beginning beautiful.

November Twenty-first.

Words and deeds are quite indifferent modes of the divine energy. Words are also actions, and actions are a kind of words.

November Twenty-second.

For the experience of each new age requires a new confession, and the world seems always waiting for its poet.

November Twenty-third.

A beauty not explicable is dearer than a beauty which we can see the end of.

November Twenty-fourth.

As the traveller who has lost his way throws his reins on his horse's neck, and trusts to the instinct of the animal to find his road, so must we do with the divine animal who carries us through this world.

November Twenty-fifth.

If the imagination intoxicates the poet, it is not inactive in other men.

November Twenty-sixth.

I think nothing is of any value in books, excepting the transcendental and extraordinary.

November Twenty-seventh.

The fate of the poor shepherd, who, blinded and lost in the snow-storm, perishes in a drift within a few feet of his cottage door, is an emblem of the state of man. On the brink of the waters of life and truth, we are miserably dying.

November Twenty-eighth.

Sleep lingers all our lifetime about our eyes, as night hovers all day in the boughs of the fir-tree.

November Twenty-ninth.

We do not know to-day whether we are busy or idle. In times when we thought ourselves indolent, we have afterwards discovered that much was accomplished, and much was begun in us.

November Thirtieth.

Every ship is a romantic object, except that we sail in. Embark, and the romance quits our vessel, and hangs on every other sail in the horizon.

DECEMBER.

*Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight.*

December First.

The whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river and the
 heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's
 feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates
 sit
Around the radiant fire-place enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

December Second.

People grieve and bemoan themselves,
but it is not half so bad with them as they
say.

December Third.

An innavigable sea washes with silent
waves between us and the things we aim at
and converse with.

December Fourth.

Nature does not like to be observed, and likes that we should be her fools and play-mates.

December Fifth.

The only thing grief has taught me, is to know how shallow it is.

December Sixth.

Life is a train of moods like a string of beads, and, as we pass through them, they prove to be many colored lenses which paint the world their own hue, and each shows only what lies in its focus.

December Seventh.

There are always sunsets, and there is always genius ; but only a few hours so serene that we can relish nature or criticism.

December Eighth.

Temperament also enters fully into the system of illusions, and shuts us in a prison of glass which we cannot see. There is an optical illusion about every person we meet.

December Ninth.

We see young men who owe us a new world, so readily and lavishly they promise, but they never acquit the debt ; they die young and dodge the account : or if they live, they lose themselves in the crowd.

December Tenth.

The grossest ignorance does not disgust like the impudent knowingness.

December Eleventh.

When at night I look at the moon and stars, I seem stationary, and they to hurry.

December Twelfth.

Our friends early appear to us as representatives of certain ideas, which they never pass or exceed.

December Thirteenth.

A man is like a bit of Labrador spar, which has no lustre as you turn it in your hand, until you come to a particular angle ; then it shows deep and beautiful colors.

December Fourteenth.

We do what we must, and call it by the best names we can, and would fain have the praise of having intended the result which ensues.

December Fifteenth.

Of course, it needs the whole society to give the symmetry we seek. The party-colored wheel must revolve very fast to appear white.

December Sixteenth.

We need change of objects. Dedication to one thought is quickly odious.

December Seventeenth.

If a man should consider the nicety of the passage of a piece of bread down his throat, he would starve.

December Eighteenth.

Life is not intellectual or critical, but sturdy. Its chief good is for well-mixed people who can enjoy what they find without question.

December Nineteenth.

I am thankful for small mercies. I compared notes with one of my friends who expects everything of the universe, and is disappointed when anything is less than the best, and I found that I begin at the other extreme, expecting nothing, and am always full of thanks for moderate goods.

December Twentieth.

The middle region of our being is the temperate zone. We may climb into the thin and cold realm of pure geometry and lifeless science, or sink into that of sensation. Between these extremes is the equator of life, of thought, of spirit, of poetry,—a narrow belt.

December Twenty-first.

The most attractive class of people are those who are powerful obliquely, and not by the direct stroke: men of genius, but not yet accredited; one gets the cheer of their light without paying too great a tax.

December Twenty-second.

We know who is benevolent, by quite other means than the amount of subscription to soup societies.

December Twenty-third.

Those who live to the future must always appear selfish to those who live to the present.

December Twenty-fourth.

I know nothing which life has to offer so satisfying as the profound good understanding, which can subsist, after much exchange of good offices, between two virtuous men, each of whom is sure of himself, and sure of his friend.

December Twenty-fifth.

A divine person is the prophecy of the mind; a friend is the hope of the heart. Our beatitude waits for the fulfilment of these two in one.

December Twenty-sixth.

There will always be in society certain persons who are mercuries of its approbation, and whose glance will at any time determine for the curious their standing in the world.

December Twenty-seventh.

Moral qualities rule the world, but at short distances the senses are despotic.

December Twenty-eighth.

A beautiful form is better than a beautiful face; a beautiful behavior is better than a beautiful form: it gives a higher pleasure than statues or pictures; it is the finest of the fine arts.

December Twenty-ninth.

Without the rich heart, wealth is an ugly beggar.

December Thirtieth.

Why have only two or three ways of life,
and not thousands? Every man is wanted,
and no man is wanted much.

December Thirty-first.

It is the secret of the world that all things
subsist, and do not die, but only retire a
little from sight, and afterwards return again.









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